

January 8, 2003

FALL

Fall in America is a beautiful season. Neither it is hot nor cold. Mind starts to calm down from the hectic activity filled summer. Summer is always full of mind boggling superfluous but pleasant events and activities. There is a great rush of Raagis and Pracharaks from India. The seasonal birds who want to make the most of sunshine, “Make hay while the sun shines.” Not only that there are so many cultural stars, musicians, actors and actresses with their hoopla. Besides you have your own lists too, visiting some National Park, State Park, Picnics, going to beaches, amusement parks, visiting long lost friends and relatives. So the plate is full.

Fall is soothing and is a kind of homecoming, from outward flow of energy to calming down and starting introspection. Most of us are feeling sorry that summer is over so soon. But some of us, a *distinct minority* starts thinking seriously to make commitments to achieve significant goals while withdrawing from frivolous, wasteful but pleasure giving pursuits. Take the case of citadels of learning, schools, colleges and universities – all these are getting ready to start a new session, “fall”.

What is nature’s role in fall? The “leaves” are the crowning beauty of a tree. The roots stay in the darkness of underground and delicately keep plowing underneath to collect and supply the nutrition to trunk, stem and eventually to leaves. The trunk provides the strength and confidence to stems and leaves. Leaves bask happily in the sun, all their nutritional needs taken care of by roots, trunk, branches and stems. Enjoying the open air and sunshine, the leaves enter into a dance that leads to an orgy. In this state of frenzy, completely oblivious of the outcome, they start changing colors, red, yellow, orange, and purple. Suddenly the serenity and stateliness of the tree as a whole is transformed into a complete chaos. The splashes of color are thrilling like watching a Bhangra Dance, but you know the show is coming to an end. When the beating of the drum stops, the dancers disappear one by one. THE LEAVES FALL. The crowning glory is transformed in a moment into the most humbling oblivion. Interestingly, those fallen leaves that stay at the root do become manure and again become part of the tree. But those that let themselves be blown by the wayward wind, God knows in what gutter they fall.

PART II

I was reminded of Dr. Mohan Singh Ji’s classic poem, “Sikhi Da Boota.” He asks which is that tree that can grow in every climate and every where and anywhere? He further asks which is that tree that more we prune it, the healthier and larger it grows. That is the tree of “Sikhi.”

A tree has to go through many “fall” seasons and many winters and many Springs.

When I look at Sikhi in general all over the world, and particularly in USA, I can compare it to the traditional fall. There are numerous colors and shades of Sikhi. Every Sikh proclaims to be the best interpreter of Gurbani. His version is not only the best but the only one. There are "Khalsa" proclaiming Sikhs, who in fact should be ashamed of them, if they look themselves in the mirror. Guru Ji is to be reflected from there. And there are those who can look into the mirror all right, but may not be able to look into their hearts, where Guru ji is to reside. At the time of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, we learn that there were 22 proclaiming to be the Gurus, now you cannot count the number. Then there are Sarabholi, Akhand Kirtanis, Harian Welan Wale, Nanaksarea, Ramdasea, Ramgrahae, Beas Wale, Sindhi – Bhai Chela Ram De, Sikligar, Jat Sikhs, Majhael, Doabea, Malwaes, on and on. See the different colors of these leaves, which have forgotten the roots and the trunk?

The next obvious and "natural" stage is of oblivion. The handwriting on the wall is there. In India, the Sikhism has been given the "fatal" injection. It is a matter of a couple of decades. Already the Sikh leadership, political, religious, even intellectuals are in shambles. They have completely lost their bearings. They have no idea of the "individuality" of Sikhism. Go to Mandir, put on tilak teekas and have no relation with Guru Granth Sahib, is the norm.

In USA and Canada, all these symptoms are in full bloom plus a big wave of "Intermarriages."

The next stage of oblivion is not far away. May be just a few decades away. All these leaves will fall from the tree of Sikhi. But those that still stay within the roots, should consider, "Jo Sharan Aae tis Kanth Lae." but those who let themselves be blown by wayward winds, will find some gutter.

Parallel scene is, that *distinct minority*, that thinks seriously and makes commitment to achieve the marvelous goals promised by Guru Gobind Singh Ji, they are getting ready to join the "Fall" semester.

After "fall", there is bleak "winter", when you cannot visualize the pristine beauty of the tree. It just stands desolate devoid of all its beauty, the leaves. But, "When winter comes, can spring be far behind?"

Low and behold the spring has come. The tree magically erupts in full bloom and God's mystery is revealed. The Khalsa now goes to East from the West. "Khalsa Pargateo Parmatam Ki Mauj."

**Jasbir Singh Sethi
Houston, Texas (USA)
Tel.281 448 9667**